

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4781

S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 6758

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR CASC ET US (HANNA, RICHARD)

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE HANNA CASE

REF: ADDIS 6690

1. SUMMARY. IT IS IMPORTANT THAT THE USG RESPOND RAPIDLY AND FIRMLY TO THE EPMG'S NOTIFICATION THAT IT HAS DECIDED TO TRY HANNA (REFTEL). THE STRONGEST RESPONSE WOULD BE TO INFORM THE EPMG THAT, IN VIEW OF THE VIOLATIONS OF THE TREATY OF AMITY WHICH HAVE OCCURRED, THE USG IS INSTITUTING A FREEZE ON SELECTED ASPECTS OF US MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN ETHIOPIA. THE MINIMUM RESPONSE IN OUR OPINION WOULD BE A HIGH-LEVEL EXPRESSION TO THE ETHIOPIAN CHARGE OF THE USG'S GREAT DISPLEASURE OVER THE MANNER IN WHICH THE EPMG HAS HANDLED THE HANNA CASE, AND A WARNING THAT FURTHER FLOUTING OF THE TREATY WILL HAVE SERIOUS REPERCUSSIONS ON US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONS. WHILE A CASE CAN CERTAINLY BE MADE FOR THE FORMER ALTERNATIVE, WE RECOMMEND THE LATTER AT THIS TIME. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO THE ETHIOPIAN SECURITY SERVICES BE IMMEDIATELY SUSPENDED IN THE EVENT THE PMAC PERMITS THE PROSECUTION TO CHARGE HANNA WITH ESPIONAGE AGAINST THE EPMG ON BEHALF OF THE USG.

2. AFTER FIVE MONTHS OF PROCRASTINATION THE EPMG HAS FINALLY DECIDED TO TRY HANNA, ALTHOUGH WE DON'T KNOW JUST WHAT THE CHARGES WILL BE OR JUST WHEN THE TRIAL WILL BE

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HELD. IN REACHING THIS DECISION THE EPMG HAS BELATEDLY

RESPONDED TO OUR INSISTENCE THAT HANNA NOT BE HELD VUINS WITHOUT TRIAL AND IT HAS MOVED BELATEDLY TOWARDS TERMINATION OF A CONTINUING VIOLATION OF THE US-ETHIOPIAN TREATY OF AMITY AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS. MOREOVER THE DECISION TO TRY HANNA CANNOT BE DISMISSED AS UNREASONABLE BECAUSE HANNA HAS ALREADY IMPLICATED HIMSELF IN TESTIMONY BEARING ON HIS ROLE IN CURRENCY MANIPULATION (ADDIS 3084).

3. LEAVING ASIDE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE MATTER, HOWEVER, THE EPMG HAS DEMONSTRATED A STRIKING INSENSITIVITY TOWARDS THE REQUIREMENTS OF GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE US, PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE INTEREST WHICH THE USG HAS DEMONSTRATED IN THE CASE, THE FACT THAT HANNA HAS PROVIDED EVIDENCE FOR THE PROSECUTION, AND THE POSSIBILITY OF SETTLING THE PROBLEM BY EXPELLING HIM. THIS INSENSIBILITY IS OF COURSE QUITE IN CHARACTER WITH THE NATURE OF THE DIRG, WHICH HAS A PREFERENCE FOR HARSH MEASURES AND HAS USUALLY DEMONSTRATED UNCONCERN REGARDING THE COSTS OF ANTAGONIZING PEOPLE. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER THE EPMG INTENDS NOT ONLY TO CHARGE HANNA WITH CURRENCY MANIPULATION BUT ALSO TO REVERT TO THE CHARGE OF ESPIONAGE ON BEHALF OF A FOREIGN POWER WHICH WE UNDERSTOOD WAS ONE OF THE CHARGES THAT HAD BEEN DRAWN UP PRIOR TO THE SUSPENSION OF ALL CHARGES. THE REFERENCE TO "LESS SERIOUS" CHARGES IN THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S NOTE STRONGLY SUGGESTS THAT THIS CHARGE MAY BE BROUGHT FORWARD AGAIN.

4. EVEN IF THE CHARGES AGAINST HANNA ARE CONFINED TO CURRENCY MANIPULATION, WE ARE WORRIED ABOUT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL EFFECTS WHICH WORD OF THE EPMG DECISION WILL HAVE ON HANNA. HE HAS IN THE PAST MENTIONED TO OUR CONSULAR OFFICER THE POSSIBILITY OF ATTEMPTING ESCAPE OR SUICIDE. THIS COULD CAUSE GREAT DAMAGE TO THE US-ETHIOPIAN BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP, INTER ALIA IN TERMS OF CONGRESSIONAL REACTION. WORD OF THE EPMG DECISION TO TRY HANNA AT THIS LATE STAGE, INCIDENTALLY, SHOULD SOON REACH CONGRESS THROUGH HANNA'S FRIENDS.

5. THE MINIMUM USG REACTION TO THE EPMG'S DECISION TO TRY HANNA WHICH WE CONSIDER APPROPRIATE WOULD BE A HIGH-SECRET

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LEVEL EXPRESSION OF THE USG'S DEEP CONCERN OVER THE MANNER IN WHICH THE EPMG HAS PROCEEDED IN THIS CASE. SUCH A DEMARCHE SHOULD COVER THE CONSEQUENCES OF FLOUTING TREATIES; THE DISRUPTIVE POTENTIAL OF DRAWING OUT THIS CASE (SENATOR SPARKMAN ALREADY INQUIRING); THE PHYSICAL/ PSYCHOLOGICAL THREAT TO THE PRISONER'S HEALTH OF FURTHER DETENTION; AND THE ADVANTAGES OF A PROMPT AND QUIET TRIAL MARKED BY APPROPRIATE USE OF THE EPMG'S INFLUENCE TO

PROTECT THE BILATERAL INTERESTS. THE PRINCIPAL PURPOSE OF SUCH A DEMARCHE WOULD BE TO IMPROVE PROSPECTS FOR ADVANCING THE DATE OF THE TRIAL AND FOR CONFINING THE CHARGES TO CURRENCY MANIPULATION.

6. THERE ARE SEVERAL OBJECTIONS TO THIS APPROACH. THE EPMG HAS SO FAR PROVEN CONSPICUOUSLY UNRESPONSIVE TO USG REPRESENTATIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WHICH ARE CONFINED TO EXHORTATION AND AVOID SPECIFIC THREATS. ANOTHER SUCH DEMARCHE, EVEN AT A VERY HIGH LEVEL, MIGHT BE READ BY THE EPMG AS AN INDICATION THAT IT CAN WITH IMPUNITY TREAT THE USG ROUGHLY AND EVEN VIOLATE TREATY PROVISIONS. SUCH A READING MIGHT NOT ONLY ENCOURAGE THE EPMG TO PROCEED WITH ESPIONAGE CHARGES AGAINST HANNA BUT ALSO TO TREAT OTHER AMERICAN INTERESTS ROUGHLY IN THE FUTURE. WE HAVE IN MIND AT THE MOMENT OUTSTANDING TAX CLAIMS AGAINST SUPPOSEDLY "EXEMPT" AALC PERSONNEL AND THE QUESTION OF COMPENSATION FOR NATIONALIZED FIRMS IN WHICH THERE IS AN AMERICAN INTEREST.

7. A MORE VIGOROUS USG RESPONSE WOULD BE TO APPLY COUNTER-PRESSURE, AS IN THE MALARIA VEHICLE CASE. THE USG COULD FOR EXAMPLE INFORM THE EPMG THAT, IN VIEW OF THE TREATY VIOLATIONS WHICH HAVE OCCURRED IN THE HANNA CASE, THE USG IS INSTITUTING A FREEZE ON SELECTED ASPECTS OF ITS MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS. THE ADVANTAGE OF SUCH A RESPONSE WOULD BE THAT IT WOULD CAUSE THE EPMG TO THINK HARD ABOUT PROCEEDING WITH THE TRIAL, ABOUT THE ADVISABILITY OF CHARGING HANNA WITH ESPIONAGE, AND ABOUT THE DESIRABILITY OF EXPEDITING THE TRIAL. MOREOVER A SHARP RESPONSE OF THIS TYPE WOULD PROBABLY MAKE THE EPMG MORE HESITANT IN THE FUTURE ABOUT HANDLING US INTERESTS ROUGHLY.

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8. THERE ARE, HOWEVER, A NUMBER OF SERIOUS OBJECTIONS TO SUCH A REACTION:

(A) WE DOUBT THAT EVEN A REACTION AS STRONG AS THIS WOULD PURSUADE THE DIRG TO REVERSE ITS DECISION TO TRY HANNA. THE RADICALS IN THE DIRG WOULD ARGUE THAT SUCH A REVERSAL WOULD BE A COMPLETE SURRENDER OF NATIONAL SOVEREIGNTY AS A RESULT OF IMPERIALIST PRESSURE, AND MORE MODERATE MEMBERS WOULD PROBABLY BE AFRAID TO CHALLENGE SUCH ARGUMENTS. IN VIEW OF THE XENOPHOBIC AND RADICAL TENDENCIES OF THE DIRG WE CANNOT BE CONFIDENT THAT STRONG PRESSURE OF THIS TYPE WOULD NECESSARILY IMPROVE THE PROSPECTS FOR A SPEEDIER TRIAL AND A Milder VERDICT.

(B) THE USG'S LEGAL JUSTIFICATION FOR RETALIATION OF THIS KIND WOULD BE SHAKY IN VIEW OF HANNA'S CONFESSED GUILT AND THE FACT THAT THE DECISION TO TRY HANNA HAS MOVED THE EPMG IN THE DIRECTION OF TERMINATING ITS TREATY VIOLATION.

(C) ANTI-US ELEMENTS IN THE PMAC WOULD CONTEND THAT US RETALIATION OF THE TYPE DESCRIBED ABOVE WAS A CLASSIC CASE OF US IMPERIALISM IN ACTION. THEY WOULD SAY, "HOW CAN WE CONTINUE TO RALLY FOR THE DEFENSE OF OUR COUNTRY

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O 061440Z JUN 75

FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4782

S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 ADDIS ABABA 6758

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS PFOR CASC ET US (HANNA, RICHARD)

SUBJECT: RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE HANNA CASE

ON AN IMPERIALIST POWER WHICH THREATENS TO CRIPPLE OUR DEFENSE EFFORT WHENEVER WE PROPOSE TO TAKE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST AN AMERICAN WHO HAS ADMITTED VIOLATING OUR LAWS?" WE BELIEVE THAT US RETALIATION RELATED TO THE HANNA CASE WOULD BE GREETED AS A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY BY THOSE MEMBERS OF THE DIRG WHO ARE MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY THE US-ETHIOPIAN RELATIONSHIP.

(D) THE INTEGRITY OF OUR MILITARY AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS WOULD BE SERIOUSLY COMPROMISED BY RETALIATORY MOVES ON OUR PART. A MAJOR REASON WHY OUR ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS ARE HIGHLY VALUED BY ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS IS THAT THEY KNWO WE HAVE NOT IN THE PAST USED THE THREAT OF WITHHOLDING THEM TO ENFORCE OUR WILL UPON THEM. TO USE SUCH

TACTICS NOW WOULD NOT ONLY PLAY INTO THE HANDS OF THE RADICALS BUT IN OUR OPINION WOULD DEEPLY SHAKE THE CONFIDENCE OF MORE MODERATE ETHIOPIAN OFFICERS IN OUR REALIABILITY.

9. WE CONCLUDE, RELUCTANTLY, THAT THE DISADVANTAGES OF RETALIATION ALONG THE LINES SUGGESTED ABOVE ARE UNACCEPTABLE. WE ACCORDINGLY RECOMMEND FOR THE PRESENT A HIGH-LEVEL APPROACH ALONG THE LINES INDICATED IN PARA 5. WE ALSO RECOMMEND THAT SUCH AN APPROACH BE IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWED
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BY INSTRUCTIONS TO THIS EMBASSY TO MAKE A SIMILAR DEMARCHE TO THE FOREIGN MINISTER. ONE POINT WHICH SHOULD BE STRESSED AGAIN IN THE LATTER DEMARCHE IS THAT WE EXPECT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TO CARRY OUT ITS EARLIER COMMITMENT TO INFORM US IN ADVANCE OF THE TRIAL OF THE PRECISE CHARGES AGAINST HANNA.

10. IN THE EVENT THE PMAC SUBSEQUENTLY PERMITS ITS PROSECUTOR TO ACCUSE HANNA OF ESPIONAGE ON BEHALF OF THE USG AGAINST THE EPMG -- A CHARGE WHICH WOULD BE UNWARRANTED AS TO ITS SUBSTANCE AND HIGHLY OFFENSIVE TO US, AS THEY WELL KNOW -- WE RECOMMEND THAT THE FINANCIAL SUBSIDY NOW BEING PROVIDED TO THE ETHIOPIAN SECURITY SERVICES BE IMMEDIATELY SUSPENDED. CAUSE WOULD THUS PROMPTLY ENGENDER EFFECT IN A RELATIVELY INVISIBLE, PERIPHERAL AREA OF SUFFICIENT SENSITIVITY TO GIVE THE EPMG PAUSE. ALTHOUGH SUCH A STEP COULD LEAD TO FURTHER EPMG RETALIATION, THEY GET MORE FROM US IN THIS AREA THAN WE FROM THEM. WE THEREFORE ESTIMATE THAT THE RISKS INVOLVED SHOULD BE ACCEPTED.
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